

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A distributed access control system that restricts access to secured items, ~~said~~ the system comprising:

a central server having a server module that provides overall access control; and

a plurality of local servers, each of ~~said~~ the local servers including a local module that provides local access control,

wherein the access control, performed by ~~said~~ the central server or ~~said~~ the local servers, operates to permit or deny access requests to the secured items by requestors.

2. (currently amended) A distributed access control system as recited in claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the access control system couples to an enterprise network to restrict access to the secured files stored in a data storage device coupled to the enterprise network.

3. (currently amended) A distributed access control system as recited in claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, wherein the access requests are at least primarily processed in a distributed manner by ~~said~~ the local servers.

4. (currently amended) A distributed access control system as recited in claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein when the access requests are processed by the ~~said~~ local servers, the requestors gain access to the secured files without having to access ~~said~~ the central server.

5. (currently amended) A distributed access control system as recited in claim [[2]] 1, wherein ~~each the~~ local module ~~can be~~ comprises a copy of the server module so ~~any of the~~ each local ~~modules~~ server can operate independent of ~~said the~~ central server and each other of ~~said the~~ plurality of local servers.

6. (currently amended) A distributed access control system as recited in claim [[2]] 1, wherein the local module ~~can be~~ comprises a subset of the server module.

7. (currently amended) A distributed access control system as recited in claim [[2]] 1, wherein access permissions for ~~said the~~ local servers ~~can be~~ are dynamically configured to pass a requestor from one of ~~said the~~ local servers to another of ~~said the~~ local servers, thereby enabling access control to be performed by the another of ~~said the~~ local servers such as when the location of the requestor changes.

8. (currently amended) A distributed access control system as recited in claim [[2]] 1, wherein the secured items are secured files.

9. (currently amended) A distributed access control system as recited in claim [[2]] 1, wherein the secured items are secured by encryption.

10. (currently amended) A method for providing access management through use of a plurality of server machines associated with different locations, ~~said the~~ the method comprising ~~the acts of~~:

(a) authenticating a user with a first server machine of the plurality of server machines with respect to a prior access request;

(b) subsequently receiving a current access request to access a secured item via a second server machine of the plurality of server machines;

(c) reconfiguring the first server machine to prevent further access by the user to secured items via the first server machine; and

(d) reconfiguring the second server machine to permit access by the user to at least the secured item via the second server machine.

11. (currently amended) A method as recited in claim 10, wherein ~~said the~~ the authenticating (a) authenticates both the user and a client machine being used by the user.

12. (original) A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the first server machine and the second server machine are access points for the user to gain access to secured items.

13. (original) A method as recited in claim 10, wherein when the user is at a first location, the user interacts over a network with the first server machine using a first client machine at the first location, and

wherein when the user is at a second location, the user interacts over a network with the second server machine using a second client machine at the second location.

14. (currently amended) A method as recited in claim [[13]] 10, wherein ~~said~~ the method further comprises ~~at least the acts of~~:

[[f)] determining, prior to ~~said~~ reconfiguring (c) or (d), whether the user is permitted to gain access from a second location to secured items via the second server machine.

15. (currently amended) A method as recited in claim [[13]] 10, wherein ~~said~~ authenticating (a) of the user occurs while the user is at a first location, and wherein ~~said~~ receiving (a) of the access request to access the secured item from the user occurs while the user is at a second location.

16. (currently amended) A method as recited in claim [[16]] 10, wherein ~~said~~ the method further comprises ~~at least the acts of~~:

(e) determining permitted locations from which the user is permitted to gain access to secured documents;

(f) determining, prior to ~~said~~ reconfiguring (c) or (d), whether the second location is one of the permitted locations for the user; and

(g) bypassing ~~said~~ reconfiguring (c) or (d) when ~~said~~ determining (f) determines that the second location is not one of the permitted locations for the user.

17. (original) A method as recited in claim 16, wherein when the user is at the first location, the user interacts over a network with the first server machine using a first client machine at the first location, and wherein when the user is at the second location, the user interacts over a network with the second server machine using a second client machine at the second location.

18. (currently amended) A computer readable medium including at least computer program code for providing access management through use of a plurality of server machines associated with different locations, said the computer readable medium comprising:

computer program code for authenticating a user with a first server machine of the plurality of server machines with respect to a prior access request;

computer program code for subsequently receiving a current access request to access a secured item via a second server machine of the plurality of server machines;

computer program code for reconfiguring the first server machine to prevent further access by the user to secured items via the first server machine; and

computer program code for reconfiguring the second server machine to permit access by the user to at least the secured item via the second server machine.

19. (original) A computer readable medium as recited in claim 18, wherein when the user is at a first location, the user interacts over a network with the first server machine using a first client machine at the first location, and

wherein when the user is at a second location, the user interacts over a network with the second server machine using a second client machine at the second location.

20. (currently amended) A computer readable medium as recited in claim [[19]] 18, ~~wherein said method further comprising~~ comprises:

computer program code for determining, prior to the reconfiguring of either the first server machine or the second server machine, whether the user is permitted to gain access from a second location to secured items via the second server machine.